



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February 12, 2009

WEST TEXAS WOMAN SENTENCED IN OIL ROYALTY FRAUD SCHEME

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that this morning in Midland, 54 year-old Elizabeth Smith Casey of Monahans, Texas, was sentenced to a total of 28 months in federal prison as a consequence of her convictions for mail fraud and aggravated identity theft. United States District Judge Robert Junell also ordered Casey to serve five years of supervised release, pay a \$2500 fine, and make approximately \$15,100 in restitution to persons she had bilked of money.

In her guilty plea on November 25, 2008, Casey admitted committing an elaborate scheme beginning in May 2005 to use courthouse records to identify persons holding oil royalty interests in Ward County but who had not collected them for some time. In most cases, the royalty interest holders had inherited them from deceased relatives and were not fully aware of their entitlement. Casey would contact the royalty holders, several of whom were elderly, typically under the guise that she was a student doing research into their family lineage, thereby learning personal identification information. Casey would then use that information to forge legal documents to present to Ward County and various oil companies, such as Wagner Oil, Chapparral Energy, and Chevron, requesting that all future royalty payments be made to Casey.

Casey's scheme unraveled when one of the companies became suspicious of the documents it had received from Casey making a royalty assignment request. The company contacted the real royalty holder only to learn that she had never transferred anything to Casey, and did not even know who Casey was.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorneys Glenn Roque-Jackson and John Klassen prosecuted the matter for the Government.

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